

December 14, 2018

SAFE WORK AND SAFE PROTESTS

Over the last number of weeks, allies have set up picket lines at postal facilities across the country to protest Trudeau's back-to-work legislation and Canada Post's refusal to negotiate fair contracts for CUPW members. We appreciate the support of our allies. It is clear that postal workers are not alone. The entire labour movement is standing behind us and is prepared to fight to defend the right to free collective bargaining.

But these picket-lines raise important health and safety issues for our members, and the public. We have received disturbing reports that management has, on multiple occasions, asked or even ordered members to drive through a crowd of people. This is completely unacceptable and totally unsafe.

NEVER DRIVE A VEHICLE THROUGH A CROWD OF PEOPLE!

Pedestrians have the right-of-way. If there are people standing in front of a vehicle, that vehicle should not move. End of story. Nobody should be putting people's lives at risk. Asking a worker to do this not only illegal, but grossly negligent.

We have the right to refuse unsafe work, that is work that may immediately endanger the health and safety of ourselves or others.

So far, reports are that every demonstration that has been set up across the country has prevented mail from leaving, but has not asked workers to refuse to cross the picket line. If this changes at any point, members should be aware of their rights.

We do not have the legal right under the labour code, or either of our collective agreements to refuse to cross a picket-line based purely on principle. We do however have the right to refuse work, under any circumstance that is not safe. If members feel intimidated or threatened by protesters, they have the right to refuse to cross. This is not strike activity, if it is a question of health and safety.

In Solidarity,



Mike Palecek
National President

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